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NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Rediscovery of *Schizostachyum cornutum* Widjaja (Poaceae, Bambusoideae), an endemic bamboo of West Sumatra, Indonesia, after more than three decades

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Abstract. The endemic bamboo *Schizostachyum cornutum* Widjaja (Poaceae, Bambusoideae) was previously known only from its type locality in Palupuh Village, Agam, West Sumatra. In 2025, after 34 years, we rediscovered this species in Limau Manis, Pauh, Padang City, West Sumatra, approximately 130 km from its type locality. The protologue of *S. cornutum* did not include an illustration or photograph of the species. Through this rediscovery, we provide photographs of this bamboo and are also able to analyse its conservation status.

Key words. Bamboo, conservation status, endemic, girdle-like, horn-like, new record, taxonomy

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INTRODUCTION

Schizostachyum cornutum Widjaja (Poaceae, Bambusoideae) is an endemic bamboo of Sumatra (Widjaja 2000, 2019; Vorontsova et al. 2016; Ritonga et al. 2024a; POWO 2025), found exclusively in West Sumatra Province, Indonesia (Widjaja 1997). It was first described by Widjaja (1997) based on a single specimen collected from Palupuh Village, Agam District, West Sumatra Province, Indonesia, on 2 March 1991 by E. A. Widjaja (no. EAW3977). The holotype is deposited at the Herbarium Bogoriense (BO) (see Damayanto and Rahmawati 2018; IPNI 2025) and consist of 23 sheaths. Since its initial publication by Widjaja (1997), no other studies have focused on *S. cornutum* (Ritonga et al. 2024a), nor has this species been re-collected, making its existence known only from the single (holotype) specimen.

The protologue of *S. cornutum* did not include an illustration or photograph of the species (Widjaja 1997) and provided only a morphological description. Morphologically, this species is distinguished by its horn-like leaf-sheath auricles (Widjaja 1997), which inspired its name *cornutum*, derived from the Latin word *cornutus*, meaning "horn-shaped" (Clifford and Bostock 2007). Young shoots of *S. cornutum* are green and glabrous. Young culms are covered with white wax below the nodes and bear scattered white hairs, becoming glabrous and green with age. Nodes typically bear a conspicuous black, girdle-like scar left by the detached sheath. Culm-sheath auricles are rounded, folded, and bristled. The ligule is denticulate and bears bristles. Blades are erect to spreading and triangular.

Schizostachyum cornutum closely resembles *S. latifolium* Gamble (Gamble 1896; Dransfield 1992, 1995) in having culm sheaths with erect to spreading blades and rounded, bristly auricles. However, it differs in its glabrous shoots, upward-pointing culm-sheath auricles, bristly culm-sheath ligules, leaf sheath with distinct horn-like and long, bristly auricles, and bristly leaf-sheath ligules.

In February 2025, we rediscovered *S. cornutum* in Limau Manis Subdistrict, Pauh District, Padang City, West Sumatra, Indonesia, and through this rediscovery, we contribute valuable new scientific data, by photographing the species for the first time. Additionally, we assess its conservation status based on our new data. The species had not been assessed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) (Ritonga et al. 2024a; IUCN 2025). Our study marks the first record of *S. cornutum* beyond its type locality after 34 years.

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METHODS

We conducted an exploration of bamboo in Sumatra, Indonesia, particularly in West Sumatra Province, in February 2025. The study site near a main road consists of a plantation and an open area dominated by grasses. Bamboo samples were collected and preserved as herbarium specimens and deposited at the Herbarium of Universitas Andalas (ANDA) and Herbarium Bogoriense (BO). Field data were recorded, and fresh specimens were photographed in their natural state. We also examined both physical and digital herbarium specimens in ANDA, BO, and the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (K). High-resolution herbarium images were accessed online through the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), the Kew Data Portal, and JSTOR Global Plants (Damayanto and Irsyam 2022).

Specimens were identified by comparing collected samples with type specimens at BO and high-resolution digital images of related species in online databases. Additionally, a literature review was conducted using relevant sources, including Widjaja (1997, 2019), Damayanto (2018), Rahayu and Ervianti (2020), and Ritonga et al. (2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2023a, 2023b, 2024a). Herbarium codes follow the standards of the Index Herbariorum (Girmansyah et al. 2018; Thiers 2025).

The species' conservation status was evaluated following B criterion of the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, which considers habitat quality, extent of occurrence (EOO), and area of occupancy (AOO) (IUCN 2024). The Geospatial Conservation Assessment Tool (GeoCAT) was used to calculate the EOO and AOO (Bachman et al. 2011; GeoCAT 2025). Spatial distribution analysis was conducted with QGIS Hannover v. 3.16 software (QGIS 2025). The English in this paper was edited using AI assistance (ChatGPT) and carefully reviewed for accuracy and clarity.

RESULTS

Schizostachyum cornutum Widjaja

Figures 1–3

New records. INDONESIA — West Sumatra • Padang City, Pauh District, Limau Manis Subdistrict; 00° 54'26.6"S, 100°28'58.5"E; 441 m a.s.l.; 2.II.2025; M.A. Ritonga leg.; 210; ANDA, BO.

Figure 1. General habit of *Schizostachyum cornutum* in West Sumatra. Photograph: Muhammad Azli Ritonga.

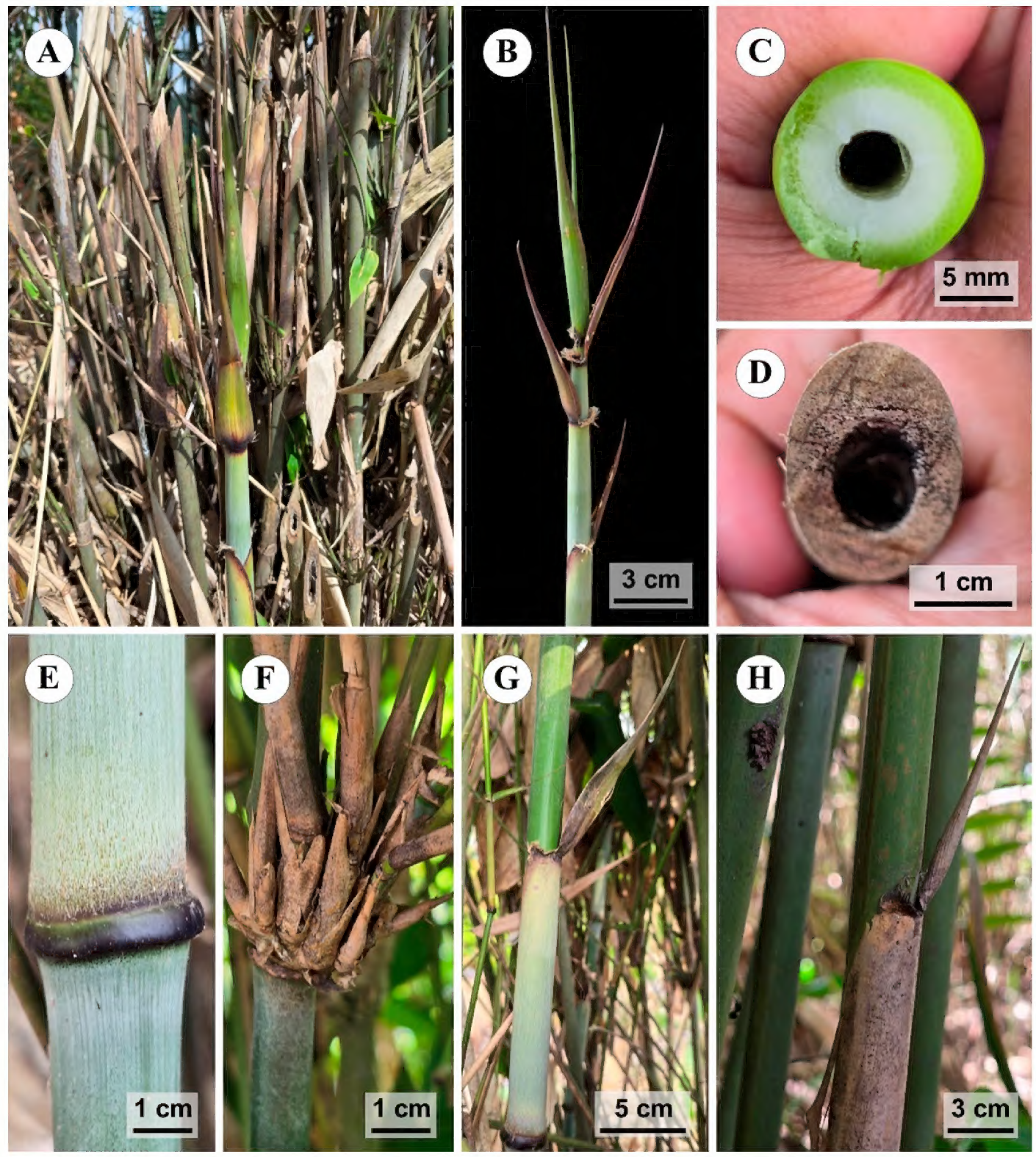

Figure 2. *Schizostachyum cornutum*. **A.** Culms. **B.** Shoot. **C.** Cross-section of young culm. **D.** Cross-section of mature culm. **E.** Internode, showing 'girdle-like' shape. **F.** Branch. **G.** Young culm sheath. **H.** Mature culm sheath. Photographs: Muhammad Azli Ritonga.

Identification. Sympodial, densely tufted. Shoots glabrous, whitish-green with a purple tint at edges of blades. Young culms with white wax and scattered white to pale-brown hairs near nodes. Mature culm 3–5 m high, green, glabrous, internodes 22–60 cm long, 1.2–3.0 cm in diameter, walls up to 3 mm thick; nodes with a conspicuous black girdle-like. Branches with several slender branches. Culm sheath 12.5–32.9 × 4.5–9.0 cm, deciduous, glabrous, apex horizontal and narrow; auricles rounded and folded (when dry), easily shed, 3–4 mm high, bristles 6–10 mm long; ligule denticulate, 2–6 mm high, bristles 2–12 mm long; blades erect to spreading, narrowly triangular, 12.0–20.2 × 1.2–2.3 cm, base narrowly attached to the sheath apex (1.0–1.7 cm wide), when young with white hairs adaxially near the base becoming glabrous with age. Leaves 17.0–35.0 × 4.7–7.9 cm, glabrous on both sides; auricles horn like or rounded, 1–2 mm high, bristles 8–9(–12) mm long; ligules entire, up to 1 mm high, bristles 2–3 mm long. Inflorescence based on Widjaja (1997). Pseudospikelets 14–17 mm long, with 1 or 2 fertile florets. Rhachilla internodes glabrous, about 4 mm long. Glumes 2 or 3, about 8 mm long, acuminate, glabrous. Lemmas about 10 mm long, apex white-hairy, acuminate, acumen long-pointed, margins ciliate. Paleas about 12 mm long, apex 2-pointed, 2-keeled, glabrous. Lodicules absent. Ovary hairy. Stigmas white. Anthers yellowish, about 6 mm long.

Updated distribution and habitat. *Schizostachyum cornutum* was previously known only from its type locality in West Sumatra, Indonesia, specifically in Palupuh Village, Agam District. However, with our new record, this species is now known from a second locality in Limau Manis Subdistrict, Pauh District, Padang City, West Sumatra (Figure 4). In Palupuh Village, *S. cornutum* was recorded in lowland habitats (Widjaja 1997). In Limau Manis Subdistrict, it was found in a plantation within an open area near a riverbank and main road at an elevation of 441 m. The vegetation surrounding *S. cornutum* at Limau Manis is characterized by grassland.

Uses and vernacular names. This species is used as stakes to support plants in plantations and for making fishing rods. Locally, it is known as *buluah* in Padang City.

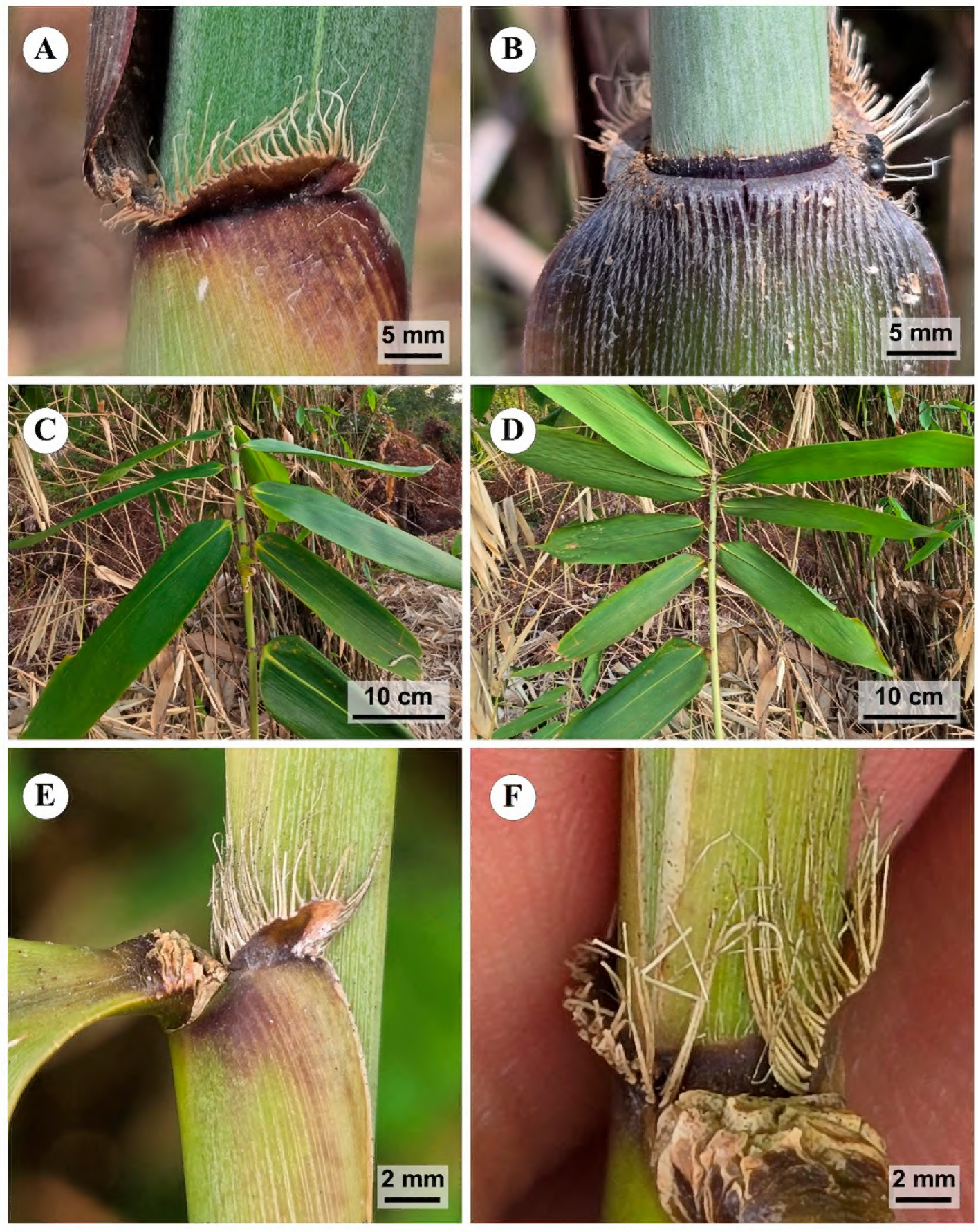

Figure 3. *Schizostachyum cornutum*. **A.** Auricle of culm sheath. **B.** Ligule of culm sheath. **C.** Adaxial leaf surfaces. **D.** Abaxial leaf surfaces. **E.** Auricle of leaf sheath. **F.** Ligule of leaf heath. Photographs: Muhammad Azli Ritonga.

Preliminary conservation status. *Schizostachyum cornutum* is endemic to West Sumatra and has been recorded in only two locations: Palupuh and Limau Manis. According to calculations using GeoCAT (2025), its AOO is 8 km^2, qualifying it as Critically Endangered (CR), while its EOO is incalculable. However, information on its population size and life cycle remains limited. Field observations in Limau Manis documented only three closely clustered bamboo clumps. Additionally, specimen records indicate that this species was last known to flower in March 1991. While specific threats to its habitat remain uncertain, potential risks include land-use conversion for agriculture, plantations, or urban development, particularly as one of its known locations is within Padang City. Furthermore, *S. cornutum* in Padang City grows near a main road, making it vulnerable to infrastructure expansion, such as road widening projects. Based on current data and following the IUCN Red List guidelines (IUCN 2024), *S. cornutum* is preliminarily categorized as Near Threatened (NT). Although it meets the criteria for B1 (EOO) and B2 (AOO), it does not fulfil at least two additional conditions required for a higher threat category.

DISCUSSION

Schizostachyum cornutum was originally known only from its type locality in West Sumatra, Indonesia, specifically in Palupuh Village, Agam District (Widjaja 1997). However, it has now also been discovered in Limau Manis Subdistrict, Pauh District, Padang City, West Sumatra, approximately 130 km south of the type locality. This study represents the first record of *S. cornutum* outside its type locality after 34 years without recollection. Wamucii (2025) reported that *S. cornutum* is native to India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. However, this

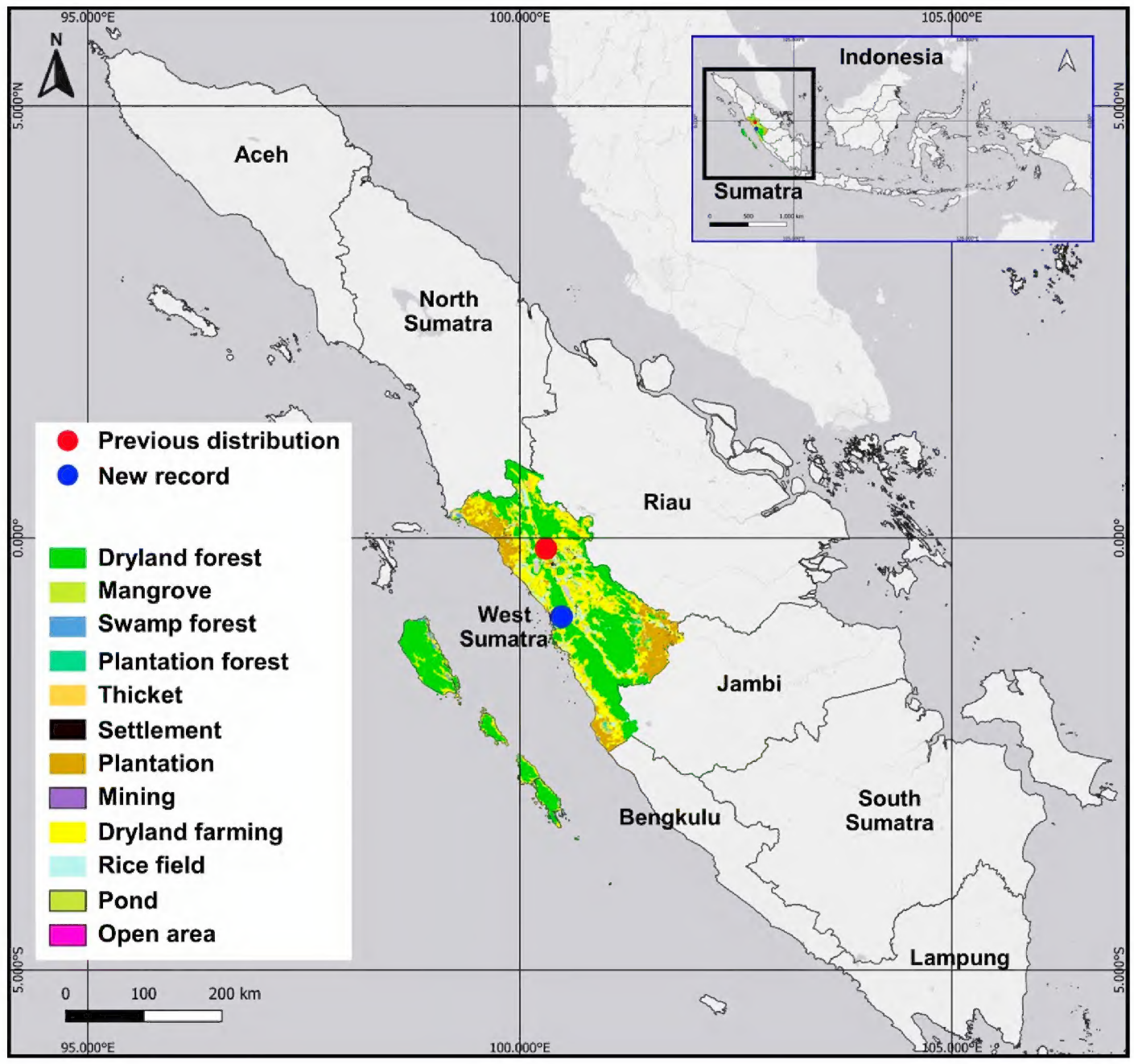

Figure 4. Distribution of *Schizostachyum cornutum* in West Sumatra, Indonesia.

statement is misleading and lacks scientific basis. The information in Wamucii (2025) appears to be uncurated and insufficiently validated, as evidenced by the inaccurate local names and uses presented for several bamboo species in Indonesia.

As a result of this rediscovery, we are able to present the first photographs of *S. cornutum*, since its protologue did not include illustrations or photographs (Widjaja 1997). A distinctive characteristic of this species is its glabrous shoots, horn-like leaf-sheath auricles, and the presence of a girdle-like structure at its nodes. The girdle-like structure on *S. cornutum*, which appears black at the nodes, is particularly remarkable as it serves as one of the distinctive characteristics of this species. The girdle is the scar left by the culm sheath (Widjaja 1997) and is in the lower part of the older culm sheath, which is very rough and thick (Damayanto et al. 2021). "Girdles" in some bamboos are typically well developed, clearly visible, and relatively large, particularly in species of the genus *Dinochloa* Buse (Dransfield 1981; Damayanto et al. 2021; Damayanto 2024; Ritonga et al. 2024b), *Parabambusa kaini* Widjaja (Widjaja 1997), and *Maclurochloa montana* (Ridl.) K.M.Wong (Wong 1993). To our knowledge, not many species of *Schizostachyum* Nees have previously been observed with a girdle-like structure similar to that of *S. cornutum* or *S. atrocingulare* Widjaja (Widjaja 1997).

On the other hand, Widjaja (1997) reported that the shoots of *S. cornutum* are green and glabrous (based on specimen E.A. Widjaja no. EAW3977). Our findings (based on specimen M.A. Ritonga no. 210) confirm that the shoots are indeed green and glabrous; however, the blades of culm sheath exhibit a purplish-green hue. After examining dried herbarium specimens of *S. cornutum* E.A. Widjaja no. EAW3977, we believe that there is a colour difference between the proper culm sheath and its blade (the proper culm sheath is green, while the blade is green with a darker tinge). Typically, if the fresh proper culm sheath and its blade had a uniform colour, they would retain a consistent hue after drying. Based on our experience studying bamboo herbarium specimens, if a fresh proper culm sheath and its blade exhibits two different colours, e.g., green and purple, the green portion will appear lighter after drying compared to the purple part. Purple-coloured culm sheath blades have also been observed in *S. purpureum* Damayanto & Widjaja (Damayanto and Widjaja 2016; Ardiyani et al. 2017), upon drying, the purple part has a noticeably different colour compared to the green part.

Widjaja (1997) reported that the holotype specimen of *S. cornutum* is housed at BO, with no mention of any isotype (see also Tropicos 2025). However, according to the label information on the holotype specimen at BO (E.A. Widjaja EAW3977), duplicates of this specimen were also sent to the herbaria K, L, and US (for herbaria codes see Thiers 2025). Despite this, we have only been able to confirm its presence at K (see RBGK

2025a, 2025b, 2025c; JSTOR 2025a, 2025b). Further verification is needed to confirm whether isotype specimens are indeed stored at L and US.

Based on the current data and in accordance with the IUCN Red List guidelines (IUCN 2024), *S. cornutum* is preliminarily classified as Near Threatened (NT). This NT status is also shared by other bamboo species endemic to Indonesia, such as *Chloothamnus schmutzii* (S.Dransf.) Widjaja (Chadburn 2020a), *Dinochloa kostermansiana* S.Dransf. (Chadburn 2020b), and *Fimbribambusa rifaiana* Widjaja (Damayanto et al. 2023). Most NT classifications are assigned due to a lack of data on habitat threats. While it meets the criteria for EOO and AOO for Critically Endangered (CR) category, it does not satisfy at least two additional conditions necessary for a higher threat category, such as severe fragmentation, ongoing population decline, or significant fluctuations. Meanwhile, to date, there have been no reports on the ex-situ conservation of *S. cornutum* in Indonesia's botanical gardens (see Solikin 2004; Sari et al. 2010; Widyatmoko et al. 2010; Lestarini et al. 2012; Arinasa et al. 2017; Fitriana et al. 2017; Sujarwo 2018; Ariati et al. 2019; Sujarwo et al. 2019; Makoyana 2025).

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Conflict of interest

The authors affirm that they have no competing interests.

Ethical statement

No ethical statement has been provided.

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Author contributions

Conceptualization: MAR, S, N, TM, IPGPD. Data curation: MAR, IPGPD. Formal analysis: MAR, IPGPD. Funding acquisition: MAR, S, N, TM. Exploration: MAR. Methodology: MAR, IPGPD. Resources: MAR, S, N, TM. Supervision: MAR, S, N, TM, IPGPD. Visualization: MAR, IPGPD. Project administration: MAR, S. Software: MAR, IPGPD. Validation: MAR, IPGPD. Writing – original draft: MAR, IPGPD. Writing – review and editing: MAR, S, N, TM, IPGPD.

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Data availability

All data supporting the findings of this study are included in the main text.

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